

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 199818

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TO AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION GENEVA

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FOLLOWING REPEAT LUXEMBOURG 631 SENT SECSTATE INFO BONN BRUSSELS
THE HAGUE FRANKFURT ROTTERDAM DATED AUG 14.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUXEMBOURG 0631

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, LU

SUBJECT: INCREASE IN NARCOTICS ARRESTS AT LUXEMBOURG
AIRPORT

1. SUMMARY: FOR SOME TIME NOW, IT HAS APPEARED THAT
INCREASINGLY STRINGENT SECURITY MEASURES AT AMSTERDAM'S
SCHIPHOL AIRPORT HAVE BEEN FORCING NARCOTICS DEALERS TO
LOOK FOR ALTERNATIVE ROUTES BY WHICH TO SMUGGLE DRUGS INTO
THAT CITY, ENTREPOINT AND PIVOT POINT OF THE SO-CALLED NEW
"DUTCH CONNECTION." RECENTLY, INDICATIONS POINT TO A
GROWING PERCENTAGE OF THIS TRAFFIC PASSING THROUGH
LUXEMBOURG'S LIGHTLY-GUARDED FINDEL AIRPORT. A NUMBER OF
RECENT ARRESTS HAVE AROUSED CONCERN HERE THAT HIS SMALL
COUNTRY COULD BECOME A MAJOR TRANSIT POINT FOR ILLICIT
DRUG TRAFFIC, AND THE PRIME MINISTER HAS CALLED FOR A
REPORT ON THE PROBLEM FROM LUXEMBOURG'S UNDERMANNED NARCOTICS
CONTROL OFFICE. HOWEVER, IT IS FAR FROM CLEAR WHETHER THE
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PAGE 02 STATE 199818

REPORT WILL PROMPT THE GOVERNMENT TO UNDERTAKE SIGNIFICANT AND

COSTLY INCREASES IN SECURITY OR SURVEILLANCE. LUXEMBOURG'S CHIEF NARCOTICS OFFICER TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT RECENT INTERCEPTIONS AT FINDEL HAVE BEEN DUE MORE TO LUCK AND TIPS FROM OTHER EUROPEAN POLICE FORCES THAN TO ORDERS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT TO CRACK DOWN ON THE TRAFFICKERS. END SUMMARY.

2. FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF A NARCOTICS CARRIER LOOKING FOR THE LEAST DANGEROUS ROUTES INTO EUROPE FROM ASIA OR THE MIDDLE EAST, LUXEMBOURG OFFERS UNDENIABLE ADVANTAGES. SECURITY AT ITS SMALL INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT IS MINIMAL, AND OFFICIALS OF ITS UNDERMANNED CUSTOMS SERVICE CARRY OUT THEIR DUTIES WITH MORE ATTENTION TO COURTESY THAN TO DETAIL. AMSTERDAM, THE NEW MARKETPLACE, IS A BARE 300 KILOMETERS AWAY, AND SINCE THE THREE BENELUX COUNTRIES ISSUE A COMMON VISA, A TRAVELLER ENTERING THE GRAND DUCHY CAN PROCEED INTO THE NETHERLANDS WITHOUT HAVING TO APPLY TO DUTCH BORDER OFFICIALS FOR A VISA. BORDERS THEMSELVES ARE TAKEN SOMEWHAT MORE CASUALLY IN THIS PART OF EUROPE THAN IN OTHERS, AND GOING FROM LUXEMBOURG INTO GERMANY (WHERE THE NEAREST AMERICAN BASES ARE ONLY A HOUR'S DRIVE AWAY) IS LIKELY TO BE A MATTER OF BEING WAVED UNINSPECTED THROUGH A SLEEPY CROSSING POINT IN THE FOREST OR MERELY CROSSING THE SURE RIVER ON AN UN-GUARDED HIKERS' FOOTBRIDGE. WITH A FORCE OF ONLY 400 MEN TO COVER THE ENTIRE COUNTRY, LUXEMBOURG'S GENDARMERIE HAS TRADITIONALLY MADE FEW ARRESTS, AND EVEN THOSE WHO ARE CAUGHT CAN COUNT ON SENTENCES CONSIDERABLY MORE LENIENT THAN IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES.

3. FOR ALL THESE REASONS, LUXEMBOURG NARCOTICS OFFICERS BELIEVE A RISING PROPORTION OF THE DRUGS REACHING AMSTERDAM IS BEING ROUTED THROUGH THEIR COUNTRY, AND A SHARP RECENT INCREASE IN ARRESTS -- INCLUDING A YOUNG AMERICAN WHO TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS THAT "THE WORD IN PAKISTAN WAS TO GO THROUGH LUXEMBOURG" -- TENDS TO BEAR THEM OUT (SEE LUX 0572 NOTAL). ACTING ON INFORMATION SUPPLIED BY THE WEST GERMAN POLICE, CUSTOMS OFFICERS HERE RECENTLY INTERCEPTED SHIPMENTS OF 3 KILOGRAMS OF HEROIN FROM MALAYSIA, 3.5 KILOS OF HEROIN FROM HONG KONG, 30 KILOS OF HASHISH FROM ZAIRE, AND 3.6 KILOS OF CONCENTRATED OIL OF CANNABIS FROM PAKISTAN.

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PAGE 03 STATE 199818

4. DISQUIETED IF NOT ALARMED BY THIS SITUATION, PRIME MINISTER THORN ORDERED THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE TO SUBMIT A DETAILED REPORT. THE REPORT, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO REACH THORN'S DESK LATER THIS MONTH, WILL LIKELY BE A COMPROMISE BETWEEN THE VIEWS OF THE SOCIALIST MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ROBERT KRIEPS -- A FORMER CONCENTRATION CAMP VICTIM WHO IS A STRONG DEFENDER OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND IS VIGOROUSLY OPPOSED TO METING OUT STIFF PRISON SENTENCES -- AND ITS DRAFTER,

CAPTAIN FERNAND DIDERICH OF THE NARCOTICS BUREAU, WHO BELIEVES THAT LIGHT SENTENCES AND UNDERMANNED POLICE BUREAUS ARE MAKING LUXEMBOURG THE WEAKEST LINK IN THE CHAIN OF EUROPEAN DRUG CONTROL EFFORTS. (LUXEMBOURG'S LENIENCY IN DRUG CASES IS LESS A MATTER OF STATUTE --IN THEORY ARTICLE 10 OF ITS 1973 DRUG CONTROL LAW PROVIDES FOR SENTENCES OF UP TO 20 YEARS FOR TRAFFICERS -- THAN OF RELUCTANCE TO APPLY THE FULL FORCE OF THE LAW TO CARRIERS WHO ARE OFTEN CLEARLY LOW-LEVEL EMPLOYEES OF DRUG RINGS.)

5. HOW THORN WILL REACT TO THE REPORT MAY WELL DEPEND ON HOW SERIOUSLY HE BELIEVES HIS EUROPEAN PARTNERS WOULD TAKE THE PROSPECT OF A MINIATURE "LUXEMBOURG CONNECTION" CREATING A GAP IN THE RING OF DRUG CONTROLS THEY ARE STRIVING TO FORGE. DOMESTICALLY, HE HAS STRONG INCENTIVES TO INACTION. FEW LUXEMBOURGERS ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY THE DRUG SHIPMENTS, WHICH MAY PASS IN AND OUT OF THE TINY COUNTRY IN A MATTER OF HOURS; THE TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDICTS AMONG THE NATIVE POPULATION IS REPORTEDLY LESS THAN FIFTY. SURVEILLANCE IS EXPENSIVE, AND BEEFING UP THE COUNTRY'S THINLY-SPREAD POLICE AND GENDARMERIE WOULD EARN HIM FEW POLITICAL POINTS AT A TIME OF ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY. STIFFER SENTENCES, ANATHEMA TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE -- A KEY FIGURE IN THORN'S COALITION PARTNER PARTY -- ALSO COST MONEY AND OVERTAX THE OLD AND CREAKING PRISON SYSTEM WITH WHICH LUXEMBOURG HAS SO FAR MADE DO. BUT THORN, AS ONE OF HIS AIDES REMARKED, IS INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE TO INTIMATIONS FROM HIS EC PARTNERS THAT THE GRAND DUCHY ACTS AS A "SOVEREIGN LOOPHOLE" TO EUROPEAN-WIDE REGULATIONS, MONETARY POLICIES, AND CONTROL EFFORTS, AND IS ANXIOUS NOT TO UNDERMINE COORDINATED EUROPEAN ACTION AGAINST DRUG ABUSE BY AN EXCESS OF THAT EASY-GOING "SCHLAMPEREI" WHICH LUXEMBOURGERS INHERITED FROM THEIR FORMER AUSTRIAN SUZERAINS.

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PAGE 04 STATE 199818

6. THE LIKELY OUTCOME OF THE PRESENT SURGE OF ACTIVITY IS THUS A RISING DESIRE ON THE PART OF LUXEMBOURG TO DO SOMETHING TO AVOID BECOMING A NOTORIOUS DRUG TRANSIT POINT, COUPLED WITH A RELUCTANCE TO UNDERTAKE ANY EXTENSIVE OR EXPENSIVE CHANGES IN ENFORCEMENT. IN THIS SITUATION, AN OPPORTUNITY MAY ARISE FOR THE U.S. TO OFFER CONSULTATION, ADVICE, OR TRAINING FOR NARCOTICS AND/OR CUSTOMS OFFICERS HERE AS AN UNDRAMATIC BUT EFFECTIVE MEANS OF HELPING LUXEMBOURG CHOK OFF THIS BUDDING SUPPLY ROUTE. WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP THE DEPARTMENT AND NEIGHBORING POSTS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS AND PROSPECTS. PHILLIPS
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